



News Release

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Children's Health Insurance Program Opens Enrollment Beginning July 1 *CHIP Enrollment Will Remain Open Until Further Notice*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) will open the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for enrollment beginning July 1, 2005. CHIP will remain open until further notice.

The 2005 Legislature passed Rep. David Hogue's and Sen. Peter Knudson's House Bill 114. In March Governor Jon Huntsman, Jr., signed HB 114 which provides an additional \$3.3 million in state funds to insure 12,000 more children -- bringing the maximum number of children covered from 28,000 to 40,000 children. With the recent increase in funding, the CHIP budget is \$51,000,000 for FY2006. The State budget contribution will draw down \$40,700,000 in funding from the Federal Government.

With the increased funding, the UDOH anticipates keeping CHIP open for several months and is not yet announcing a closing date for the open enrollment. "We'll keep the program open to enrollment until all of the newly funded openings are filled," says Michael Hales, Assistant Director, Health Care Financing, UDOH.

In December 2001, the UDOH reached the maximum number of children that the FY2002 budget could cover and chose to begin operating CHIP with open enrollment sessions. Open enrollment windows began three years ago (June 2002) and typically run about two weeks each.

"We are pleased that legislative and executive level funding support has put CHIP enrollment back on the right track," says Dr. David Sundwall, Executive Director, UDOH. "By opening CHIP for an extended period of time, we hope to immediately

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impact the uninsured rate for children in Utah.” According to the 2004 UDOH Health Status Survey, 250,000 Utahns are uninsured, of which 62,800 are children.

CHIP is a health insurance plan for children funded jointly by the federal and state governments. To receive CHIP, children must qualify based on family size and household income. For example, a family of four earning up to \$38,700 a year may qualify. In addition, children must be younger than 19, U.S. citizens or legal residents, and not currently covered by health insurance to qualify. Once enrolled on CHIP, families may be required to pay premiums of up to \$25 every three months. Premiums and small co-pays make it possible for CHIP to insure more children.

Since 1998, CHIP has covered more than 86,000 Utah kids. The total number of children who can be covered by CHIP at any one time is determined by available funding. The UDOH encourages parents, grandparents, teachers and others who care for children to contact **1-877-KIDS-NOW** to receive information and help spread the word about open enrollment for CHIP.

Beginning **Friday, July 1**, applications will be accepted in person, online at www.health.utah.gov/chip, or by mail. Learn more about CHIP by making a simple call to 1-877-KIDS-NOW to find a UDOH eligibility office in your area.

Beginning in late June, the UDOH will run its “A Good Call for Kids” English/Spanish media campaign featuring children who have benefited from CHIP. Watch and listen for more information about CHIP open enrollment on TV and radio and in newspapers. CHIP enrollment information will also be disseminated through community partners, schools, childcare agencies, and advocacy groups. For more information, visit www.health.utah.gov/chip or call 1-877-KIDS-NOW.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.